

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
ARM Loxahatchee NWR
10216 Lee Road
Boynton Beach, FL 33437-4796
Phone: 561/732-3684
Fax: 561/369-7190

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 20, 2004

Release #: 04/5-20

Contact: Serena J. Rinker 561/735-6029

ARTHUR R. MARSHALL LOXAHATCHEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Refuge Closes Headquarters Area to Bank Fishing

Bank fishing at the Headquarters Area of the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge is closed to the public as of Friday, May 21, 2004. The area of closure will extend from the fenced weather station on the north to the fishing platform on the south. The closure includes the fishing platform and areas on the L-40 south of the fishing platform. The closure was prompted by an increase of refuge visitor and alligator interactions. The closure will be in effect until the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel feel it is safe to open the area. For more information visitors may call the Visitor Center at (561) 734-8303 or visit our web site at <http://Loxahatchee.fws.gov>.

The vast majority of human and alligator interactions are by those alligators that have purposely or inadvertently been fed by humans. Feeding an alligator might seem as if you're providing it with an easy meal, but you could be causing more harm. An alligator that gets used to being fed associates people with food. It can't distinguish between "hand-out" and "hand" and may become aggressive toward people when food is not forthcoming.

The refuge is located off U.S. 441/SR 7, two miles south of SR 804 (Boynton Beach Blvd) and three miles north of SR 806 (Delray Beach's Atlantic Avenue). The refuge is currently open from 6:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., seven days a week. Refuge hours change seasonally and are posted at each entrance. The Visitor Center hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. from Wednesday through Friday and from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on weekends and holidays. The Visitor Center is closed on Christmas Day. An entrance fee of \$5.00 per vehicle or \$1.00 per pedestrian is charged. A variety of annual passes, including a \$12.00 refuge specific annual pass, are available.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 100 million – acre National Wildlife Refuge System comprised of over 540 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands, and other special management areas. It also operates 66 national fish hatcheries, 64 fish and wildlife management offices, and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.